

# Wyoming Game and Fish Department Hunter Education Newsletter



## Coordinator's Comments

### Teaching: The Greatest Act of Optimism!

As a certified NRA instructor, I receive email notices from the NRA store, many of which I delete after a quick scan. This past winter, one of these notices to purchase supplies or training aids really caught my eye. The headline read, **Teaching: The Greatest Act of Optimism!**, and was accompanied by a graphic of a water goblet with a half-full / half-empty label. To the left of this glass in big bold red letters was the statement: **Make Sure Your Instructor Glass is Always Half Full.**

I am one of the greatest optimists when it comes to Hunter Education (HE) and the great work conducted by the Wyoming volunteer instructors. The Wyoming HE program is important work to ensure safe, legal, and responsible new hunters and shooters. HE can also be a powerful recruitment tool when conducted according to the guidelines laid out by the Wyoming Game and Fish (WGF) Commission and with an enthusiastic HE instructor. A HE certification can be much more than the meeting of a statutory requirement when instructors truly engage students in a HE class. Students, young and old, often come to classes just desiring the HE card to be in compliance with the law but often go away with a much deeper appreciation of what it takes to proclaim, "I am a hunter."

Our WGF Commission, the WGF Department, the HE teaching cadre, and statewide HE partners share this strong common optimism for the future of hunting and understand the future of hunting is dependent upon a quality introduction and foundation offered in quality HE classes.



In 2010, The 300 + volunteer cadre members gave 6,318 hours of community service time conducting 250 classes while certifying 5,668 new hunters. I am optimistic that in 2011 HE numbers will be higher in all three categories, as they have been rising for the last four years.

As we move forward and adjust to the changes being made to the Hunter Education program, we need to remind ourselves of the importance of high quality, engaging HE classes. HE changes, here in Wyoming and nationwide, are aimed at better addressing the changing times and today's students, while keeping in mind our common goal of working to ensuring a firm foundation.

I am optimistic for the continued successes within the Wyoming HE program due to the Commission's support, the cadre's hard work, and the commitment made by our partners. It is good to work with so many whose glasses are half full.

*"Conserving Wildlife — Serving People"*



## A Sense of Place

### New Hunter Education Instructor Academy

The 2011 HE Instructor Academy was conducted July 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> at the WGFD's Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp. This orientation weekend complies with Wyoming Game and Fish Commission regulation changes to Chapter 26 Section 4; subsection b whereby, all instructors shall attend a new instructor orientation workshop within two (2) years of becoming a certified instructor. Newly certified instructors have a two-year window to attend an orientation weekend to finalize their certification with our HE Instructor Academy offered each summer. This important pre-service/early in-service HE training opportunity is designed to increase continuity, correctness, credibility, and improve communication in an already strong program conducted by dedicated volunteers.

Lodging and meals are provided by the WGFD at the **WGFD's Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp**, located east of Dubois on Torrey Creek. The only expense to instructors will be providing their own transportation to this wonderful venue. Instructors leave with many teaching aids and Professional Teaching Standards Board credit is available for certified teachers attending this HE Academy.

*The photo below shows HE coordinator Jim Dawson working with new HE instructors on eye dominance, an important skill for new shooters and for ethical and responsible hunting. Kansas HE coordinator Kent Barrett also worked with new instructors at the Wingshooting session.*

*Photo by Margaret James.*



*Photo above shows new instructor Juliann Terry working on firearms handling safety with WGFD I & E Specialists Dennie Hammer and Lucy Diggins – Wold . Photo by Margaret James*

At each New Instructor Academy, the role of Wyoming HE instructors as vital members of the WGFD team is discussed. It is explained how cadre members have a responsibility to teach HE as a WGFD message and must advocate for the WGFD mission of "Conserving Wildlife – Serving People." As WGFD team members, HE instructors must always teach with the mission in mind and continually strive to embrace the Department's core values of *Customer Service-Focus, Trust, Respect, Accountability, and Credibility*. By continuing to keep these principles in the forefront, HE program volunteer instructors will continue to be counted as essential WGFD HE team members.





## HE Recruitment and Retention

### 2011 YHEC

#### Wyoming & South Dakota Youth Hunter Education Challenge



*Photo by Heather Shideman*

The WGFD HE program along with Rich Rothleuthner of the Upton Gun Club and the Weston Friends of the NRA again conducted the Wyoming Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) last May in Upton.

Since YHEC has become a stand alone event separate from the Wyoming Hunting & Fishing Heritage Exposition (Expo) it has grown steadily larger. For the past two years South Dakota kids have also been invited.

The Wyoming YHEC event is a qualifier for the International YHEC and again Wyoming youths will be traveling to Raton, New Mexico to enjoy the fun and showcase their skills at the NRA's Whittington Center.

#### HE taught in new WGFD "Terry Cleveland" Headquarters

Places to teach HE classes vary greatly with each community with some instructors finding open doors and others losing the places they have taught for years. Some instructors must pay a user fee and others find it nearly impossible to bring firearms in for the required handling component.

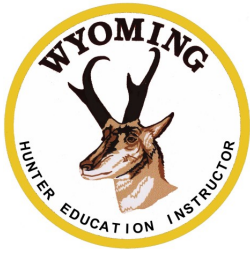
This past spring, HE coordinator Jim Dawson and Joetta Osborn taught a HE class in the remodeled WGFD headquarters, just weeks after it re-opened.

WGFD administration and building designers understood the importance of including a classroom for HE, as well as other after hour activities. This need for classroom space was great enough to design the new headquarters building with an exterior door, so that HE instructors could easily reserve and access the HE classroom during weekend and night time classes. Also integrated into the design of this classroom are large screen A/V connections and a smart board. For a HE instructor to utilize this room and equipment a short training session is required.

This summer the Cheyenne HE teaching team of Rich and Gail Fanelli used the new classroom with good results and positive feedback from those taking their HE class.



*These two smiling young men were two of the first to graduate from a HE class which was taught in the newly remodeled WGFD (Terry Cleveland) Headquarters building in Cheyenne. Photo by Jim Dawson*



**Jim Dawson, Hunter Education Coordinator**

**3030 Energy Lane. Casper, WY 82604**

**Phone: 307.473.3439 Fax: 307.473.3433**

**Email: james.dawson@wyo.gov**

**Margaret James, Hunter Education Main Office**

**5400 Bishop Blvd., Cheyenne, WY 82006**

**Phone: 307-777-4538 Fax: 307-777-4602**

**Email: margaret.james@wyo.gov**

*As Hunter Education Volunteer Instructors you are a voice for the Department's mission:*

*"Conserving Wildlife — Serving People"*

*The Department's message that we as HE instructors teach has been established by the Game and Fish Commission and includes six major topics:*

1. **Hunter Responsibility and Ethics**
2. **Wildlife Conservation and Management**
3. **Firearms and Firearm Safety**
4. **Game & Fish Statutes and Regulations**
5. **Game Care & Wildlife Identification**
6. **Outdoor Safety**

## HE Training to Engage Students



At the HE academy, new instructors were provided with ideas and techniques for engaging students. These new instructors learned about a safety trail as conducted by veteran instructors Gary Wolfe of Rock Springs and Pete and Tamara Tarver from Sheridan.

The 14th annual **Wyoming Hunting & Fishing Heritage Expo** (Expo) is fast approaching and will be conducted Sept. 8th, 9th and 10th in Casper. The Expo provides a wonderful opportunity for folks both young and old to learn about or practice hunting and fishing skills. Many HE instructors participate annually as Expo volunteers.

A popular activity at Expo each year is the Hunter Safety and Ethics trail. This highly engaging trail has been organized by Cody HE instructor team Cindy Rockenfield and Ed Budny. Cindy creates shoot/don't shoot scenarios patterned after what she offers at multiple Youth Hunter Education Challenges. Cindy will not be able to attend this year due to other commitments and the Expo staff is looking for good people to work this popular activity.

One of the more popular booths is the HE booth conducted by a group of Casper HE instructors. Mary Norman, Robin Kepple, and Levi Anthony were a few of those manning the HE booth over the three days in past years. This booth is an interactive activity and provides information HE in general and specifically about Casper HE classes.

Five years ago the Expo Advisory Board asked how the press and media could better understand the fun kids have at the shooting events during Expo. The Media/Celebrity Pentathlon Challenge was established to better spread the word of the fun and learning taking place at the shooting ranges during Expo. By allowing major sponsors, officials, and the media to partake in a fun shoot using the model of the Youth Pentathlon Challenge, a better understanding by the media and sponsors was achieved. Shotgunning, archery, .22 rifle shooting, spin casting, and fly casting are part of the challenge. Great fun is had by all and the media coverage has been exceptional. If interested in volunteering at the Expo, contact Margaret James at 307-777-4538.

## Dates to Remember

- Many antelope archery areas open August 15th
- Blue & Ruffed grouse and Dove opens Sept. 1, 2011
- EXPO—14th annual Casper September 8-10, 2011
- Ladies Shotgunning Clinic September 11, 2011, Casper